

FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION  
SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM FUNDS REQUEST AND  
FISCAL REPORTING FORMS  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

JULY 30, 2003

The following FAQs were written in response to the questions and recommendations that were raised by County Commissions regarding the School Readiness (SR) Program Funds Request and Fiscal Reporting Forms mailed in June 2003.

*1. Q: If we did not receive FY 02/03 School Readiness funds, do we need to complete the Annual School Readiness Program Budget Update (Form 1A), Request for School Readiness Program Funds and Cash Match Certification (Form 1B), and Fiscal Year End Expenditure Report (Form 2A)?*

A: No. Only those County Commissions with approved School Readiness Programs that received FY 02/03 funds are required to complete Forms 1A, 1B, and 2A. These forms are used to request FY 03/04 funds. If your approved SR Program funding includes only FY 03/04 SR funds, then you **do not** need to complete these forms until next year when requesting FY 04/05 funds. In this case, the forms are for your information only. County Commissions that have recently submitted a School Readiness Program application, and upon approval will receive FY 03/04 funds, also do not need to complete these forms until next year.

*2. Q: Do we need to complete both the Annual School Readiness Program Budget Update (Form 1A) and Request for School Readiness Program Funds and Cash Match Certification (Form 1B) even if there are no budget changes to report?*

A: Yes. To request and receive a disbursement of SR funds for FY 03/04, both Forms 1A and 1B must be completed and submitted to the First 5 CCFC even if there are no budget changes to report. If there are budget changes to report, County Commissions must submit both Forms 1A and 1B and a budget narrative explaining the changes.

*3. Q: Do we need to complete the First 5 School Readiness Program Profile and Activity Report Form 2B?*

A: No. County Commissions are no longer responsible for completing Form 2B that was to be due on October 15, 2003. The information that was requested is similar to the information that is currently being collected in the Annual Report. To avoid duplication of data collection efforts, counties will provide this information in the Annual Report. However, please update and send in the School Readiness Program Directory Information (Form 5) if there are any changes, as this form will be used to provide current School Readiness Program information in the School Readiness Directory.

*4. Q: Due to unforeseen start-up issues, it has taken longer to begin School Readiness Program operations. Do we still have to spend all School Readiness Matching Funds within 4 years?*

A: No. The policy has been: "The policy intent for School Readiness Matching Funds and Implementation Funds was to have County Commissions expend these funds within four years of their approved applications (FAQ #25)." However, since County Commissions could apply for funds many times during the past two fiscal years, some of the 4-year School Readiness Programs operate over 5 fiscal years. Given the staggered start-up and the fact that some counties have encountered delays in start-up, School Readiness Programs may operate over 5 fiscal years. For example, if a County Commission received approval for SR funds during the December 2002 application period, they would have received funds for part of FY 02/03, FY 03/04, FY 04/05, FY 05/06, and part of FY 06/07. The county can operate the SR Program and spend funds through the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> FY of operation. In a second example, if a County Commission received approval during the March 2003 application period, they could spend funds over FY 03/04, FY 04/05, FY 05/06, FY 06/07, and FY 07/08.

*5. Q: The Request for School Readiness Program Funds and Cash Match Certification Form 1B requires the County Commission to certify cash match for the prior fiscal year. May the certification of new cash match for the prior fiscal year be a reasonable estimate? The timing of the certification of the new cash match is difficult because SR Programs that have various funding and collaborative partners have not been able to close their books and collect the information by the August 1 due date.*

A: Yes. The amount of cash match certified on Form 1B may be a reasonably accurate estimate. It should represent your best estimate of the new cash match that was invested by the various partners, and it should be auditable and traceable. It will not be a problem if it does not agree dollar for dollar with the final figure reported on the Fiscal Year End Expenditure Report (Form 2A). However, if the County Commission has been monitoring the School Readiness Program through the year, the figure should be relatively close.

*6. Q: How should Implementation Funds be reported?*

A: Implementation Funds should be reported in the annual fiscal audit with all other county commission revenues. Implementation Funds should **not** be reported separately on the new Forms 1A or 2A. The only time Implementation Funds should be reported in School Readiness Program fiscal reports is when they are included as part of the County Commission Program funding. **NOTE:** Implementation Funds included in a county school readiness program funding CANNOT be used for cash match for State Commission funds.

*7. Q: When can County Commissions apply for School Readiness Implementation Funds?*

A: It is recommended that School Readiness Implementation Funds be requested on an annual basis on or before August 1. However, Implementation Funds can be requested at any time, but no more than once during each fiscal year during the four-year program, except for the first year of the program when a two-year allocation can be requested. Implementation Funds are a fixed allocation, and a County cannot receive more than the 4-year allocation.

*8. Q: Why is the carryover of State funds being deducted from future funding allocations (Form 1A)?*

A: The reporting and possible reduction of carryover funds from the next year's disbursement (non-expended and non-encumbered funds) is intended to assist and remind County Commissions to keep the SR Programs within manageable and sustainable levels that avoid a level of funding that cannot be supported and sustained in future years. If the carryover funds have been committed over the long term and are needed to sustain the program at its current activity level, then no deduction will occur. The County Commission needs to provide this information in a budget narrative attached to Form 1A